



Our Cover:
(Photo by Lynda Beam)

...t negatives. It's the kind of "testing
...at dog people can feel good about.
...ors

Belgian Laekenois Joins Herding Group

This month, the "Fourth Belgian" enters the AKC Stud Book

“For now, much of the public is still unaware that Belgium has a fourth sheepdog,” Susi Szeremy wrote in the June 2019 GAZETTE, “but the appealing Laekenois is not a breed likely to stay in the shadows for long.” On July 1, the Belgian Laekenois made the leap from shadows to spotlight, entering the Herding Group as the 196th AKC-recognized breed.

BREED BACKSTORY

Belgium’s climate and terrain are highly favorable for livestock and dairy production, and the small but industrious country has always been self-sufficient in these commodities. Belgium has long been the world’s leading exporter of milk chocolate, a key component of the national economy.

It should, then, come as no surprise that old-time Belgian farmers were preoccupied with cattle and the breeding of herding dogs.

In fact, there were once eight types of shepherd dogs unique to Belgium.

By the 1890s, when they were officially classified for the first time, there remained the four we know today.

The Belgian herders are so similar that once they were recognized by the AKC as a single breed, anatomically identical but varied in coat textures, colors, and length. They are the Tervuren (longhaired, “blackened” fawn or red), the Belgian Sheepdog (longhaired, black), the Malinois (shorthaired), and, from the village of Laeken, the Laekenois (wirehaired).

With the recognition of the Laekenois, the four Belgians are reunited under the AKC banner.

FROM THE STANDARD

“The first impression of the Belgian Laekenois is that of a square, well-balanced dog, elegant in appearance, with an exceedingly proud carriage of the head and neck. He is a strong, agile, well-muscled animal, alert and full of life. His whole conformation gives the impression of depth and solidity without bulkiness. ...

“The male dog is usually somewhat

more impressive and grand than his female counterpart. The bitch should have a distinctly feminine look. Both male and female should be judged



equally. ... Males should be 24 to 26 inches in height and females 22 to 24 inches, measured at the withers. The length, measured from point of breast-

bone to point of rump, should equal the height. Bitches may be slightly longer.

“Bone structure should be moderately heavy in proportion to his height so that he is well-balanced throughout and neither spindly or leggy nor cumbersome and bulky.

“The Belgian Laekenois should stand squarely on all fours. From a side view the topline, front legs, and back legs should closely approximate a square.”

PARENT CLUB

American Belgian Laekenois Association, Inc.

President Sharii Hunt *President@Laeken.Club*

Secretary Donald L. Hyatt II *Secretary@Laeken.Club*

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Links

Full breed standard

The four Belgians: side-by-side comparison

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Walker and Saunders preaching to the choir. Right: Bouboule, Toulouse-Lautrec's

Down and Back: Stories from the American Kennel Club Archives is the new podcast series that combines the resources of the AKC Library & Archives and the GAZETTE to trace the history of the purebred dog through the ages.

The eight-part series is fully produced, with sound effects, music, and all the bells and whistles that bring the stories to life with humor and imagination.